बैन किया हुआ है। अगर कोई स्टेट चाहती है तो इसको एक पर्टिकुलर स्थान पर बेन किया जा सकता है। लेकिन साथ ही साथ हमको यह भी देखना पड़ता है कि प्लास्टिक के बहुत सारे यूज हैं और उसका जब तक कोई आल्टरनेटिव नहीं आ जाता, तो एक साथ सबको बंद करना संभव नहीं है। लेकिन मैं इससे सहमत हूं कि फेज़ मैनर में इसके बारे में कदम उठाते रहना चाहिए और जहां-जैहां भी इनसे पर्यावरण खराब होता है या और कोई बात होती है तो इस पर बैन लगना चाहिए।

Vanishing brides and abandoned grooms abroad

*242. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of cases of vanishing brides and abandoned grooms abroad has increased in the recent past;

(b) whether Government had formed a Committee in this regard; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS (SHRI VAYALAR RAVI): (a) to (e) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

(a) to (c) The Ministry was created in May 2004 and since then the problem of desertion of Indian women by their overseas Indian husbands is being monitored. The complaints received regarding Indian women deserted/divorced by their overseas Indian husbands for the last 3 years is as follows:

Year 2005	—	19
Year 2006	—	65
Year 2007 (till August)	—	89

Complaints are also received in Ministry of Women and Child Development, NCW and NHRC. Thus, precise data on the number of cases of vanishing brides and abandoned grooms abroad is not available. An inter-Ministerial Committee has been constituted to study the problems arising in marriages with overseas Indians and to suggest ways to address them.

MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Sir, the Minister has given data from 2005 to 2007. The divorce rate in overseas is increasing. No doubt, the cases of brides vanishing abroad, as well as, within India are also increasing. There are foeticides, murders, dowry deaths, etc. So, my question to the hon. Minister is: May I know whether the Government has set up any judicial forum or any counselling centres, in India, to provide legal assistance in India to avoid excessive litigation expenses, and to provide them counselling?

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, the Ministry has taken certain initiatives. One of the initiatives is that the Ministry has constituted an inter-Ministerial Committee on the basis of the National Commission for Women's report. The Committee includes the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Ministry of Law. Besides, the State Governments, the

National Commission for Women, and the Human Rights Commission are also involved. So, this is the constitution of Inter-Ministerial Committee. They have appointed a Task Force. The Task Force is examining one of the proposals of appointing Special Prosecutors. In every State, there should be Special Prosecutors to argue the cases. We are also thinking in terms of repatriation of the accused, who is abroad. Thirdly, where there is a bilateral agreement, a clause can be inserted so that civil proceedings could be taken up in other countries also. These three issues are already under the consideration of the Task Force. We are very much concerned about the plight of the women abroad. So, we are taking all the steps, including that of financial assistance, maybe, of a meagre amount of one thousand dollars. But that is given for preparation and everything. The NGOs and others are also involved in this. The situation has changed very much today only after the Ministry had taken the initiative during the last three years. They have sensitised the whole issue, and every embassy has been sensitised. So, we are well aware that the number is increasing everyday. There are a large number of cases. This figure which I have given here is only the number of complaints which we have received. Thousands of people are not complaining to me. This is also a problem. So, Sir, definitely, this Ministry will take all the initiatives. We are taking preventive measures also. We are taking all the initiatives to see that the women's interests are protected, and that the women are protected. We will protect them and see that they are not orphaned abroad.

MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Sir, my second supplementary is this. The National Commission for Women is delaying dowry harassment cases and some are pending since 1998. So, my point is, there are many cases pending in the National Commission for Women which have come from women staying abroad also. And, Sir, it is observed that, sometimes, the Ministry's response is very much delayed. And it becomes very difficult for the National Commission for Women to seek queries, come to the point, and draw up a conclusion.

Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he has kept this in mind and whether there is any proposal to set up a time limit to deal with the queries of these kinds of cases. How many cases are pending with you? And, how many months will you take to deal with the cases of this nature?

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, my Ministry is responding instantly. I myself made hundreds of telephone calls to the Ambassadors and Consulate Generals. As you know, Sir, America, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and England are the main five countries which are involved in this. And, to some extent the Gulf is also involved. We are in touch with them. We write letters to them. The National Commission for Women is doing a good job. The Women and Child Welfare Ministry is also involved in this. That is why, a task force has been constituted by the Inter-Ministerial Committee for this purpose. Money was allotted last year and this year also. An amount of Rs. 3 crores has been provided for the assistance of women abroad. All these initiatives have been taken in collaboration with the Women's Commission and also the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare. Sir, one of the major components of this process is the State Government. They are very important partners because when we write letters to the Chief Ministers ...*(Interruptions)*...

MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Sir, I am asking about the National Commission, not about the State Commissions. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, let the hon. Minister proceed.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: As soon as we receive complaints, I used to write to the Chief Ministers saying that the complaints from the lady may be documented for the purpose of FIR. They have done this in some States. This is number one.

Secondly, I want to say that we are in close touch with the Women's Commission. Their report is with me. On the basis of this report, an Inter-Ministerial Committee has been formed. We are discussing it. We are having discussions with them also. There is no delay. I can assure this House that there is no delay. When any complaint comes to us, we work in collaboration with the Women's Commission.. We organised five meetings in collaboration with them. I can assure the Member that we have very good terms with them and we are doing a good work. We have also written to the Embassies of all these countries to form a cell to deal with this subject. My Ministry is also forming cells in some States. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: I am not asking about terms, I am asking about delays. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shrimati Brinda Karat. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: There is no delay at all.

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, I have been in touch with the Minister on this. I personally believe that he has displayed sensitivity and commitment to deal with the issue. But the problem is very large. For example, in just one State of Punjab, it is reported that about 30,000 such cases have taken place in the last two years. This is an estimate which has been made. So, one of the basic problems in helping the women to access justice is the legal framework because a crime which is a crime in India may not be a crime in other countries. For example, dowry, for which reason many of the brides are vanishing, is not a crime in many of the countries where they are now residents. So, in that connection, the main recommendation which has been made is for India to sign, particularly, protocols in the Hague Commission which will enable quick extradition of those who committed this crime.

I would like to remind the Minister that on the 7th of May in this very House when a similar question was asked, he gave a categorical assurance in response to my supplementary which is as follows:

"The Government has already decided to sign the Hague Convention. This is being taken up in the Ministry of External Affairs. It is on the move. It may be done at the earliest." Sir, this was in May, but, unfortunately, it was not done at the earliest. and, till now, that Convention has not been signed. According to my information, no further steps have been taken. So, would the hon. Minister kindly respond as to exactly when is this going to happen, and what is the timeframe by which we can expect this?

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, as regards the first part of the question, I agree with the hon. Minister that there are a large number of such cases ...*(Interruptions)*...

AN HON. MEMBER: She is not a Minister. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please let the hon. Minister proceed.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: I am sorry, Sir. ...*(Interruptions)*... The hon. Member is, to an extent, right, because I have got some reports by a social group, which made a study in this regard. According to this report, there were 10,000 such cases a few years ago. The former Canadian High Commissioner also sent a report that there are huge number of cases. So, I am not disputing this.

The other basic question is, it is true that I gave an assurance. On that basis, the Ministry of External Affairs has already moved for membership in the Hague Conference. But one country has to sponsor it. The Government of Netherlands has already sponsored it. The Government of Netherlands sponsored our application for the membership. Now, the general body has to approve it. The approval has to be unanimous. So, our Ambassador is doing all kinds of canvassing to see that it is accepted. This has already been moved and Netherlands has sponsored our case. That is where it stands today, and we will move it again.

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज : सभापति महोदय, मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहती हूं कि हम सब यह स्वीकार कर रहे हैं कि भारतीय कन्याओं की प्रवासी भारतीयों से शादी के सिलसिले में धोखाधड़ी की शिकायतें बढ़ती जा रही हैं। ये शिकायतें सही जानकारी के अभाव में बढ़ रही हैं। वहां पर लड़के कमाते कम हैं और बताते ज्यादा हैं, करते कुछ हैं और बताते कुछ हैं। मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहती हूं कि हर देश में हमारे मिशन्स हैं, अगर हमारे मिशन्स वहां रहने वाले भारतीयों के बारे में एक सही डाटा नैट पर उपलब्ध करवा दें तो यह शिकायतें अगर मुकम्मल तौर पर नहीं तो 90 परसेंट जरूर समाप्त हो सकती हैं। क्या आप अपने मिशन्स को यह निर्देश जारी करेंगे कि वहां रहने वाले भारतीयों के बारे में सही और पूर्ण जानकारी नैट पर उपलब्ध कराई जाए?

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, there are two ways to deal with this subject. One is, yes, we are in touch with the Indian Missions, and we are trying to sensitise them to have the details as much as possible. When some complaint goes to them, they register that complaint and inform us also. If there is a direct complaint, we write them back. This is one side. The other side is, there are also some campaigns to be launched in the country itself. We have taken some initiatives. After the Supreme Court judgement, we have written to all the State Governments for compulsory registration of marriages. We have made an enactment. This is number one.

Number two is, Sir, the awareness campaigns will begin within one or two months. There are three ways, electronic media, publication, and films, by which we are going to launch a big campaign, in collaboration with the States. Sir, we are going to involve States also. These kinds of awareness campaigns will be launched in villages also. Sir, the other thing is, we are organising seminars in different States involving people, and we want to have participation from panchayat members also.

So, the awareness campaign is one of the most important things. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Monitoring cells in the ...*(Interruptions)*..

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please continue Mr. Ravi.

SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Sir, I am not talking about complaints. Mr. Minister, I am only saying that providing data should be made mandatory and compulsory.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Madam, definitely, I will discuss this matter with the Minister of External Affairs. I will make it compulsory. Through them, I will proceed on this matter. I am explaining to you what is being done in States also. We are requesting the State Governments to have a cell. In every State, there should be a Cell in every Department on this subject. Prosecution is one of the major things which we can do.

Sir, we also want to have a provision relating to repatriation and impounding of passports. As for impounding of passports, it has been recommended by the National Commission of Women. We have referred it to the Ministry of External Affairs to know what action they can take. Then, photograph of wife should also be there in the passport. There are some difficulties. We are taking up those difficulties. Whatever positive suggestions have come from the National Commission of Women, and in whatever way we can implement all this, we are discussing all these matters. We are expediting it. I can only say that we don't want further delay We want to do it as early as possible. All these things are coming in one stroke. Much better. I hope the things will be much better.

श्री मोती लाल वोरा : माननीय सभापति जी, मैं माननीय मंत्री जी से यह जानना चाहता हूं कि सन् 2005, 2006, 2007 में उन्हें जो शिकायतें मिली हैं, उन शिकायतों पर उन्होंने ऐसी कौन सी कार्रवाई की है जिससे सभी शिकायतकर्त्ताओं को राहत मिले? मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि किन-किन राज्यों में इस प्रकार की शिकायतें बढ़ रही हैं? जैसाकि हम सभी जानते हैं कि पंजाब में लगभग तीस से पैंतीस हजार महिलाओं को उनके प्रवासी पतियों ने छोड़ रखा है, ऐसे कितने राज्य हैं, जहां से माननीय मंत्री जी को लिखने के बाद उनका जवाब मिला है और जो शिकायतें माननीय मंत्री जी को, उनके मंत्रालय को मिली हैं, उन पर उन्होंने कौन सी कार्रवाई की है?

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Sir, there are a large number of complaints. I think, out of 179 complaints, 53 are from Punjab, 33 are from Delhi; 16 are from Andhra Pradesh; 12 are from U.P.; 13 are from Haryana and like that. But these are only those complaints which I have received. There are other Ministries and agencies which also receive such complaints. The Ministry of Women and Child Development also receives complaints in large numbers. The National Commission on Women receives complaints; the Human Rights Commission also receives complaints. So, they all have to be compiled together. Even various reports show this. I am not exaggerating. The report of the Council of Social Research in New Delhi a few years ago said that they suspect that the minimum number of such complaints would be 10,000 from Punjab alone. There is a Canadian report also which shows that this number is almost 20,000.

Now, with regard to the point as to what action we have taken, Sir, I would like to again repeat that as soon as such complaints are received, we immediately refer them to the concerned Embassies. Then we write a letter to the Chief Ministers concerned. Then follows the prosecution proceedings on the woman's complaint. So, on the one side, there is the provision of prosecution, and on the other side, we see in what way we can deal with them in the host countries in which they are living. Then, there is a proposal which has yet to take place legally. Once we become a member of the Hague Conference, the International Private Law will come into operation. On that basis, the two things, 44A of the Civil Procedure Code as well as 29C of the Civil Procedure Code would become applicable once we become a member, and then there will be a bilateral agreement with these countries.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question, Q. No. 243. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्रीमती विप्लव ठाकुर: सर, यह इतनी इम्पोर्टेन्ट बात है, हमें भी बोलने का टाइम दिया जाए ...**(व्यवधान)**... इतनी इम्पोर्टेन्ट बात है ...**(व्यवधान)**... हमें टाइम दिया जाए ...**(व्यवधान)**... महिलाओं को बोलने दिया जाए ...**(व्यवधान)**...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please. Q. No. 243. ...*(Interruptions)*... Q. No. 243. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Sir, we never get a chance. Please see how many Members want to speak. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I understand the importance of the subject. But there are questions which have to be gone through. ...*(Interruptions)*... There are other procedures by which this subject can be discussed at length. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Sir, please allow a Half-an-Hour discussion. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: The concerned Members can request for a Half-an-Hour Discussion on this subject. ...*(Interruptions)*... Q. No. 243 please. ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्रीमती विप्लव ठाकुर: इसे रख लीजिए ...**(व्यवधान)**... हम कर देंगे।

'नदियों के संरक्षण के लिए राष्ट्रीय-नीति'

†*243. **श्री प्यारे लाल खंडेलवाल:** क्या **प्रधान मंत्री** यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या यह भी सच है कि देश की अधिकांशत: बड़ी नदियों का जल प्रदूषित होकर काला पड़ चुका है;

(ख) क्या यह भी सच है कि उक्त समस्या से निपटने के लिए किये गए सारे प्रयास विफल रहे हैं;

(ग) यदि हां, तो क्या सरकार नदियों को प्रदूषण से बचाने के लिए कोई राष्ट्रीय नीति बनाने पर विचार कर रही है; और

(घ) यदि नहीं, तो तत्संबंधी राज्यवार ब्यौरा क्या है?

†मूल सूचना हिन्दी में प्राप्त हुई।